

TOWN OF MANSFIELD/DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, January 16, 2008
Audrey Beck Municipal Building
Council Chambers

Minutes

Members Present: A. Barberet, R. Blicher, G. Cole, E. Higgins, R. Gergler, C. Lary, C. Paulhus, R. Pellegrine, W. Stauder (Chair), W. Solenski, S. Thomas

Members Absent: V. Stearns

Staff: Maria Capriola (Town of Mansfield), Deputy Warden Neal Kearney (DOC)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting came to order at 3:05p.m.

II. MINUTES

Lt. Solenski made a motion, approve the minutes of October 17, 2007. Mr. Paulhus seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

List of Offenses: Mr. Pellegrine mentioned the Governor's task force that is looking at home invasions and asked if burglars are housed at Bergin. Deputy Warden Kearney stated that burglars and all other prisoners are housed at Bergin except for sex offenders. Lt. Solenski stated that a Burglary I is a home invasion, low class felony.

Notification System Test: Warden Higgins notified the Committee that the test did not occur on December 20, 2007 as planned. Bergin will run 2 tests in the near future. Bergin will send out the notification letter shortly.

IV. WARDEN'S REPORT AND DISCUSSION

Population Status Report & List of Offenses: Warden Higgins reviewed October 2007-December 2007 inmate statistics with the Committee. Bergin did not use inmate overflow space around the holidays. However, Bergin now has an overflow population of 108, for a total number of inmates of 1,070. Bergin is authorized for extra staff and overtime when they house an overflow population. Overall statistics were consistent except for the number of paroles which have decreased.

Community Outreach & Volunteer Activities Update: Deputy Warden Kearney discussed the Prisoner Outreach program (POP). Recently inmates had visited East Hartford and Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall camp to conduct outreach efforts with at-risk youth. Inmates share their stories with the youth, tell them where they went wrong and what they have learned from their experiences. The calendar is booking up with schools interested in participating in this program. People interested in participating can contact Deputy Warden Kearney.

The outside detail program is still occurring; Bergin is assisting area towns.

Programming, Education, & Recreation Update: Deputy Warden Kearney stated that the school is doing well. Bergin participates in the GED initiative. Bergin awards the most GEDs of any facility in the state, and each year they continue to surpass the previous year in terms of GEDs awarded.

Five new counselors will be starting; they are replacing retirees and transfers. DOC staff wants to work at Bergin and they have a good transfer list to work from.

Mr. Pellegrine inquired about the impact of snowfall and bad weather on recreational programming. Deputy Warden Kearney stated that there is no impact because Bergin has a gymnasium; staff moves programs indoors during inclement weather.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman did not have a report for this meeting. Ms. Barberet inquired about the status of the fence (razor wire installation). Warden Higgins stated that Bergin has gone out to bid for the project. No contract has been awarded yet, so the fence improvements have not yet been made.

VI. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK

There was no one from the public who wished to address the committee at this meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

2007 Annual Report: The Committee discussed 2007 accomplishments and 2008 goals for the annual report. Accomplishments discussed included: approved fence design and installation; visited Bergin twice

which included touring the school, substance abuse program, grounds, and meeting with inmates; and merged the two Committees. 2008 goals discussed included: testing the notification system; conducting an annual visit to Bergin in April; writing an interest article for residents about Bergin i.e. for the Mansfield Record Online.

Other: Deputy Warden Kearney inquired about and the Committee supported the suggestion to have a presentation on gangs at the April site visit.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria E. Capriola, M.P.A.
Assistant to Town Manager